

Bacteria Back at Landing Road

By KEITH L. MARTIN

For the second week in a row, swimmers at Landing Road Beach were greeted with a sign telling them to stay out of the water due to high bacteria levels.

On Friday morning, the Board of Health closed the beach citing bacteria counts similar to those that shut down the beach on July 1. According to Health Agent Jennifer Dalrymple, runoff from rain the day before tests were conducted is most likely the cause of the elevated levels, but her department is actively watching the presence of bacteria at the beach.

"We'll keep our eye out for the rest of the summer and track the rain with our testing," she said. "If it [remains] high, we'll look at drainage from Bay Road down to Landing Road because there could be outfall pipes nearby, so we'll have to look."

Dalrymple said that her office will work with the Department of Public Works if there is reason to suspect that water falling into street grates and traveling through the underground pipes could be affecting the beach waters.

"The bacteria levels were not high last year, so we are in a quandary as to why they are high this year after the rain events we are having," she said.

While tides and currents act to disperse the contaminants in beach waters, the level of bacteria is generally reduced within 24 hours of the rainfall or after one tide cycle. The lab analysis of bacteria tests on five Duxbury waters sources require a 24-hour incubation period, however, meaning that while the

bacteria may be gone, the tests still indicate elevated levels.

A moratorium on swimming in beach waters is issued by the Board of Health if the number of the bacteria *Enterococci* exceeds 104 colony forming units per 100ml. *Enterococcus* has proven to be the most useful bacterial indicator for fecal contaminant in marine waters.

According to tests done on July 7, Landing Road's waters had a level of 120. Tests performed on July 8 and released the next day showed a new level of 14.

On July 1, both Landing Road and Shipyard Lane beaches were closed for 24 hours due to high bacteria levels, but opened the next day after new tests showed significantly lower levels.

Ingesting a large amount of the water with the bacteria could cause a variety of diseases, and the most common illness is a mild gastroenteritis with flu-like symptoms. Rather than put citizens at any risk, the Board of Health closes the beach until bacteria return to a healthy level as shown through follow-up testing.

As for any public concerns, Dalrymple said that her department is keeping tabs on bacteria levels at all the town's public beach waters and citizens can take extra precautions to protect themselves from the bacteria.

"There shouldn't be too much concern, but I'd definitely recommend not swimming at Shipyard Lane or Landing Road beaches right after a rain event," she said. "It's best to let the tide cycle things through and it's better to be safe than sorry."



Beachgoers on Landing Road found another warning of high bacteria levels on Friday

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